



University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

2021 State of the Campus Address

Delivered via pre-recorded video by Don Elliman, Oct. 27, 2021

Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us today as we discuss the state of our campus.

Before we begin, let's recognize the truly extraordinary times we've been living in. And let's take a moment of silence for those we've lost, and those who are sick or suffering, as COVID-19 continues to take its toll.

We stand alongside all of those among our campus community who have been impacted deeply. We extend our gratitude to healthcare workers at the frontlines - those on our faculty and our hospital partners - for the selfless care they have delivered, and continue to deliver, to patients under our watch. And we recognize that so many members of our faculty, staff and student body - as well as our alumni - have given considerable time to the challenges of COVID, under very difficult circumstances. Thank you.

Our Future is Brimming with Possibilities

Over the past year and a half, we have seen very clearly what's possible when we unite in our common purpose, in pursuit of our noble mission.

We have been tested again and again, in new and different ways, and we've changed course countless times. We must have set a new record for the use of the word "pivot." We have risen - and continue to rise - to those challenges. And to come out stronger for it.

The uncertainties we've faced have led to momentous change and sparked meaningful conversations about our future. They've also highlighted the vital importance of the work you do here each and every day, and brought new possibilities to the forefront.

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity" (Albert Einstein), and in every aspect of our mission, we have found opportunities to improve.

We've learned so much over the course of the pandemic, and we have much to do. Looking ahead, that path is clear. We're on solid footing, and our future is brimming with possibilities.

Many of our pivots have already become permanent, and the perspective we've gained will inform our path forward.

So, as I address you today, I'd like to highlight our gains and focus on the great many possibilities in front of us.

We had hoped for an in-person address this year from our newest university facility - the Anschutz Health Sciences Building - but the realities of COVID have taken us once again virtual. Still, the spectacular new building is a fitting symbol for this year's address, and we hope to see each of you in it this time next year.

390,000 Square Feet of Possibilities

When we broke ground in 2019, we referred to the Anschutz Health Sciences Building as "390,000 square feet of possibilities." Today, it stands as a campus landmark and a pride point.

We are thankful to the crews who have kept construction on track amid the pandemic. And we're deeply grateful to Phil Anschutz and everyone at The Anschutz Foundation for helping make this project - and so many others on this campus - a reality.

The building is a reflection of the sheer will it takes to get big things done - of what can be achieved when talented, hardworking people come together. And it's an example of what is possible when we work together to turn bold ideas into reality, take risks and push boundaries, and create solutions where there may appear to be none. That's what happens on our campus, and why we're all here.

I'm grateful to be with you today to talk about more big initiatives ahead. We have a lot to look forward to, so let's get down to it.

Continuing On an Upward Trajectory

Amid the shifting circumstances of the last year, we've held our ground in essential areas and continued on an upward trajectory. A look at our 5-year progress is particularly impressive. By nearly every measure, we've seen remarkable gains - from increases in clinical revenues and volume, to the growth of our faculty and staff, and student applications and enrollment, to rising research funding and philanthropic support.

Our schools and college are thriving.

- The School of Medicine had more than 14,000 primary applications for this year's class of 184. The first 4-year cohort of MD students began studies at our new branch campus at CSU in Fort Collins this summer, and we've continued growth at the UCCS branch. There is a new curriculum in the School of Medicine.
- The College of Nursing built a successful program at CU South Denver. The plan is to double in size over the next five years to meet rapidly growing need for skilled nurses.
- The Colorado School of Public Health has been a proven leader at a time when the spotlight has been pointed directly on public health. It has served Colorado brilliantly and

continues to do so. Attracting future leaders in droves, it's grown 45% in applications and 36% in enrollments in just three years.

- The Skaggs School of Pharmacy opened a Center for Drug Discovery last month, which houses one-of-a-kind drug-screening technology that promises to speed next-generation drug development.
- The School of Dental Medicine is setting the pace in dental education through the use of the latest simulation techniques and virtual reality tools. It has sustained clinical operations throughout the pandemic, and is among the unsung heroes of COVID-19.

We're making progress on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Regina Richards, PhD, MSW. She and her team hit the ground running, connecting on campus and off, to move us toward systemic change. They've formed the Chancellor's DEICE Leadership Council to define action areas, including equitable hiring, anti-racist curriculum training, promotion and tenure rules, and more. They've helped inspire philanthropic support - five DEI-specific scholarship funds this year alone, and we now have 73 funds dedicated to DEI initiatives with a \$1 million match from the CU Office of the President to accelerate our efforts. Our campus now supports over 70 community engagement programs, and we are building more.

Among our community-serving programs, work continues on a new Salud Family Health Center clinic, part of the 27-acre Aurora Community Health Commons, which will offer low-cost integrated care and social services, and provide valuable hands-on training for our students. We're moving forward on our Center for Health Equity, which will deepen our ability to address social determinants of health and disparities in healthcare.

Our research and innovation enterprise is booming.

And take a look at philanthropy. More than 10,000 gifts were made over the last year, with 23 new scholarships and fellowships, and 12 new endowed chairs established last year alone. Over the past five years, we have raised \$1 billion in gifts and commitments. Our endowment has grown to \$815 million, which will provide stable funding for the life-changing research, education and care in perpetuity. That's a spectacular achievement due to the inspirational work of our faculty and staff, and their partnership with Scott Arthur, Jim Hodge and the team in the Office of Advancement.

Progress on Priority Areas

Five years ago, we set a number of strategic priorities to guide us. We've made great strides, and will continue to foster growth in those areas.

Invest in Clinical Excellence

Our hospital partners are a great asset, particularly over the course of the pandemic. They're ranked among the very best due in no small part to our faculty, whose skill and stature bolster our reputation as a destination for the finest care.

We've continued to invest in the quality and the quantity of our clinical and science faculty with major new recruitments. Faculty overall has grown by 25% over five years. The School of Medicine has grown by 31%, Colorado School of Public Health by 17%, and the College of Nursing has grown research faculty with eight new hires since Dean Eli Provencio-Vasquez, RN, PhD, took the helm.

Telehealth has rapidly expanded with the pandemic, and techniques like remote patient monitoring are just some of the possibilities for the future - not only delivering best care, but driving the science behind it to new heights, and increasing access to care for people regardless of geography or ability to travel.

Having leading hospital affiliates right here is obviously a huge part of what makes our campus a standout nationally. We will continue to sustain and grow those relationships.

Increase and Diversify Research Funding

We've continued to see significant growth in research volume. We hit \$654 million last year, \$298 million of it from NIH awards. Total research funding was \$770 million, including research-associated gifts. That's a testament to the leading-edge work taking place here.

Among the examples:

- A prestigious \$10 million NCI SPORE grant for head and neck cancer led by Antonio Jimeno, MD.
- A \$5.9 million NCI Outstanding Investigator Award to Craig Jordan, PhD, and his work on human leukemia stem cells.
- A \$3 million grant for a Colorado School of Public Health study led by John Adgate, PhD, MSPH; Lee Newman, MD, MA; and colleagues on climate and kidney health of sugarcane workers in Guatemala.
- Too many COVID-related grants to list, including:
 - \$11.7 million for vaccine trials led by Thomas Campbell, MD, and Myron Levin, MD.
 - \$8.7 million in monoclonal antibody trials led by Adit Ginde, MD.
 - \$3.7 million in modeling and contact tracing led by Dean Jon Samet, MD, MS; Lisa Miller, MD, MSPH; and Elaine Scallan, PhD, MA.

We've increased industry partnerships to create new healthcare technologies, drugs and devices. An example is BioIntelliSense - remote patient monitoring technology - scaled around the world in record time with COVID, in addition to helping our own patients.

No doubt we'll continue to attract funding. We have invested heavily in our research infrastructure. Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Tom Flaig, MD, we've bolstered our capacity and our talent.

- Lori Sussel, PhD, was appointed Associate Vice Chancellor of Basic Sciences Research one year ago. She boosted basic science efforts and brought vast expertise in cell and developmental biology, and diabetes to our leadership team.
- We have the Center for COMBAT Research, led by Vik Bebarta, MD. It has grown substantially in size, and deepened expertise in combat trauma, acute mental health and related fields.
- We have the CCTSI (Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute), led by Ron Sokol, MD, that continues to grow and prosper.
- We have a recent grant from the NIH led by Donald Nease, MD - part of a national network focused on reducing the burden of COVID on those hardest hit, especially communities of color.

We've also increased our investments in Bioengineering over the last five years - a central piece of our education and research enterprise - and we'll continue our focus there.

Most critically, it's the skilled physicians and researchers occupying our buildings, clinics and labs everyday who keep us at the forefront - leaders in their fields who attract other leaders, funders and partners to collaborate on redefining medicine.

Invest in Innovation

It's clear that the creation of CU Innovations, and our partnerships with CCTSI and the innovation operations at UCH and Children's Hospital, were a winning bet. Now we're doubling down.

We founded CU Innovations in 2016. The past five years have shown us the value of partnerships, and of having pathways right here to take your ideas from research bench to clinic and to market. We're expanding on that as you'll hear in a bit.

We've seen the benefits of investing in our own and incentivizing high-risk, high-reward research - through SPARK, Gates Grubstake Fund, the Chancellor's Discovery and Innovation Fund, and the CU Healthcare Innovation Fund. And with CU Boulder, spurring cross-campus, cross-disciplinary projects through AB Nexus, now in its third round.

We can proudly say therapies developed in our labs, manufactured right here in our facilities, and tested in our clinical setting are impacting patients now - including Investigator-Initiated

Trials of CAR-T cell therapies. We have patients in both adult and pediatric trials now, and it's a wonderful example of collaboration with our hospital partners.

That's the magic of an academic medical campus and a clear example of our role in pushing today's science forward to redefine the healthcare of tomorrow.

We have key recruits, including our first Chief Research Informatics Officer. We're putting our stake in the ground for what's next.

Significantly Escalate our Work in Mental Health and Wellness

We said we'd significantly escalate our work in mental health and wellness. COVID has brought into stark relief what we all know - mental health must be a priority and integrated into all that we do.

Our psychiatry department has rapidly scaled up. Over the past three years, we've seen a 321% increase in lives touched by our faculty - from 46,000 in 2019 to almost 200,000 in 2021 - under the leadership of Neill Epperson, MD.

- We've increased our programs and services - ramped up offerings to meet COVID, including a faculty and staff mental health clinic, and a student and resident mental health clinic.
- We've leveraged telehealth to support over 500 frontline providers at our hospital partners and many many more across Colorado.
- We've united forces by bringing the Johnson Depression Center under the department's umbrella, and we've brought technology into practice with the National Mental Health Innovation Center.
- We've partnered with Children's on mental health for kids, and with UCHHealth as they invest \$100 million in integrated mental health care.
- We've grown focus at the newly named Ludeman Family Center for Women's Health Research - a launching pad for more work in this burgeoning area.

Increase Regional and National Marketing Efforts

Through all this we're also telling our story, and the world is taking notice. We're increasingly known for who we are and what we offer - as a destination for healing and for hope.

It's an honor to share your breakthroughs and your achievements, and to highlight the special calling those on our campus share to ask hard questions, explore the possibilities, and create solutions. And we're going to do more of it.

Strategic Initiatives for the Future

While these focus areas aren't going away, we have spent the last year determining how to build on this foundation of strength.

We're firmly established as a leading academic medical campus. Our track record is outstanding. We've attracted top talent and highly driven students. We've built strong industry partnerships, and our potential is enormous. Now is the time to set our vision for who and what we'll become in the next stage of our growth.

We know that a few characteristics will define the arc of our future success:

- our capacity for risk tolerance, innovation and agility,
- our collective, entrepreneurial spirit,
- an equitable and inclusive campus environment that prioritizes diversity and promotes mental health,
- and a booming data and bioinformatics enterprise.

I'm eager to share the initiatives we have laid out, with input from so many among our community, that we will pursue over the next five years.

Let me first thank Associate Vice Chancellor Laura Borgelt, PharmD, MBA, and her team in the Office of Strategic Initiatives for deftly leading our campus through a robust visioning process. My deepest gratitude to each of you who took part for your time and thoughtful attention to our future.

I hope you will share pride and excitement in the 5 initiatives that will take us through 2026 and beyond.

Leveraging Data

The first is leveraging data, and we'll now hear from our new Chief Research Informatics Officer Melissa Haendel, PhD, about the possibilities ahead for that very subject.

[Video: Leveraging Data](#)

We are proud to count Dr. Haendel among our ranks. With her expertise and oversight in a new role, we are positioned to unlock the power of data on this campus like never before.

We've recruited other key leaders in this space and formed a veritable dream team: Casey Greene, PhD, and Sean Davis, MD, PhD, with the partnership of Chris Smith and Laura Morris in the Office of Information Technology, and together with experts at the Colorado School of Public Health and the Colorado Center for Personalized Medicine, this team is breaking down boundaries in our data landscape and changing the game at CU Anschutz.

We're building a data strategy and framework now, and are eager to get going on plans for action. We'll know we've made progress when our physicians and researchers have real-time data at their fingertips - when you can spend less time digging for information and more time applying it to your day to day. That's just the tip of the iceberg.

Building a Healthcare Innovation Institute

We're building a healthcare innovation institute, and now Clay Smith, MD, will share some insights about what that might look like.

- [Video: Building a Healthcare Innovation Institute](#)

We have demonstrated our immense capacity for innovation and bold breakthroughs through CU Innovations, and now we're taking our work to a new level with the development of this healthcare innovation institute.

As Dr. Smith explained, this institute means that your discoveries and developments will reach patients and industry partners even more quickly than they can today. It also means heightened recognition of your expertise and your ingenuity, and the creation of a dedicated hub of collaborative, entrepreneurial research and development.

Enhancing the Student Experience

We will focus on enhancing the student experience. Our students are obviously at the center of what we do. Student senate president, Hana Belay-Gebru, will tell us about the importance of enhancing the student experience.

- [Video: Enhancing the Student Experience](#)

As Hana said, students are the very heart of our campus. We are committed to enriching the environment they learn in every day, and to creating a shared sense of place and a welcoming, supportive culture.

We attract bright future leaders from diverse backgrounds. By giving them the very best experience while they're part of our campus, we set them up to shape the healthcare of tomorrow.

Among our first projects is an enhancement of student support services - to centralize resources and make them widely accessible, including career services; immersive learning experiences; disability, access and inclusion resources; student health promotion; financial aid; and more.

And we're proud to let you know that, just this week, our consolidated campus (CU Denver | Anschutz) was named a "Hispanic-Serving Institution" by the U.S. Department of Education. One of only a few medical campuses in the country to receive HSI designation - and the only

research university in Colorado to have done so. That brings opportunities to campus such as new funding sources with impacts for student services and programming. It is a pride point and an important milestone in our efforts to cultivate a vibrant, diverse campus - one that reflects the people and communities we serve.

Partnering on Patient-Centered Care

Partnering on patient care is obviously at the core of what we do, and delivering the finest patient care today while reinventing the care of the future is what our clinical mission is all about. Now, we'll hear from Anne Fuhlbrigge, MD, about the possibilities ahead.

- [Video: Partnering on Patient-Centered Care](#)

We know what's possible when we join forces with our partners in the service of patients and their families.

We've seen the success of this approach with our award-winning eConsults program - created by a team of our faculty to bring timely specialty consults to patients remotely. Since it began in 2018, more than 10,000 eConsults have been placed, and 7,500 in-person office visits have been avoided.

The result is highly tailored, more accessible care, at a lower cost - and demonstrates the benefits of working together.

Investing in Our People

Last, and certainly not least, is investing in our people. Our most valuable assets are the smart, driven individuals who make possible what we do. Investing in our own people is essential, and Channing Tate, PhD, MPH, can tell us why.

- [Video: Investing in Our People](#)

I hope you can see yourselves in Dr. Tate's story.

It's because of you that CU Anschutz is the powerhouse it is today - a place where talented people come together to make the impossible possible.

You make this place special, and we want you to grow and thrive here.

We're launching efforts to focus first on holistic hiring practices and campus climate, career pathways for staff, and promotion and tenure processes for faculty.

You'll hear more about each of these strategic initiatives as we move forward, and you can visit the [Office of Strategic Initiatives website](#) for more information.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to take part in the Campus and Workplace Culture Survey - live now through mid-November. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment, and we want to learn from your experiences to make CU Anschutz the most supportive place it can be.

Looking Ahead: Challenges & Opportunities

Our financial outlook is bright and, as a result of that in part, we are proud that we were able to raise the campus minimum wage and use funds to buy down tuition this year.

But we'd be remiss not to address the challenges ahead.

- COVID hasn't gone away. It's had devastating impacts for people and communities - and for providers who continue to weather that storm. We must be advocates for science, and we must support one another.
- The cost of healthcare in this country continues to increase sharply, and inequities have risen to the fore. We must be part of that conversation about how to make care more affordable, and accessible, for everyone.
- On our campus, we will continue to balance safe return to pre-pandemic operations with evolving conditions. We know we are at our best when we're together, and we'll keep working toward that future state.

Possibilities for the Future

In closing, thank you for doing your part as we've navigated tumultuous times together. We are in a place of strength, on the heels of a year when our progress was nothing short of miraculous. We have proven ourselves stronger than ever, and capable of anything.

The future *truly is* brimming with possibilities. This is the place to realize them. When we harness the talent, perspectives and intellect of our community, our potential is boundless.

I can't wait to walk with you into the next phase of our history and the tremendous possibilities ahead.

As our time together today comes to a close, let's bring our focus back to what matters most - your dedication to pushing boundaries, bettering human health, and delivering hope and healing to those under our care.

This final video demonstrates the power of those possibilities, and the transformational impact your work has had on the lives of those we serve.

[**Video: Overcoming Cancer: The Healing Power of a Doctor-Patient Relationship featuring Pat and Sue Krummrei, and Manali Kamdar, MD**](#)

Thank you.